

## **REMARKS**

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

### **I. Amendments to the Claims**

Claims 1-10 remain cancelled. In addition, by this amendment claims 13, 21, 23 and 26 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein.

Further, independent claim 11 has been amended to clarify features of the invention recited therein and to further distinguish the present invention from the reference relied upon in the rejection discussed below.

It is also noted that dependent claims 14, 20, 22 and 25 have been amended to remain consistent with amended independent claim 11.

### **II. 35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejection**

Claims 11-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Nakanishi (U.S. 3,209,510). This rejection is believed clearly inapplicable to amended independent claim 11 and claims 12, 14-20, 22, 24 and 25 that depend therefrom for the following reasons.

Amended independent claim 11 recites a block that includes a plurality of through holes for having first stretching members inserted therein, and includes a row of recessed portions formed on outer upper and lower peripheral surfaces of the block and for having second stretching members disposed therein. Finally, claim 11 recites that the block includes a plurality of cavities such that (1) each cavity extends throughout the block and has an opening at the upper and lower peripheral surfaces of the block, (2) each cavity crosses the row of recessed portions

and is arranged along a lengthwise direction of the row of recessed portions, and (3) a width W1 of each cavity is greater than a width W2 of each recessed portion and extends beyond the width W2 of each recessed portion so as to cover the width W2 of each recessed portion (the width W1 and the width W2 being measured in a direction perpendicular to the lengthwise direction of the row of recessed portions). Nakanishi fails to disclose or suggest above-mentioned distinguishing features (1)-(3) as recited in independent claim 11.

Initially, the Applicants note that page 2 of the Office Action equates (i) the “through holes,” as recited in claim 11 with the “bottomless tubes 17” of Nakanishi, (ii) the “recessed portions,” as recited in claim 11 with the “grooves 13, 63” of Nakanishi, and (iii) the “cavities,” as recited in claim 11 with the “sprues 15” of Nakanishi.

The Applicants respectfully disagree with above-mentioned position (iii) set forth on page 2 of the Office Action, because, as recited in amended independent claim 11, each “cavity” is formed throughout the block has an opening at the upper and lower peripheral surfaces of the block.

On the other hand, Nakanishi teaches that a block includes sprues 15, which are simply recesses formed on the upper and/or lower surfaces of the block (see Figs. 1, 5 and 6). More specifically, Figs. 1, 5 and 6 of Nakanishi illustrate that the sprues 15 do not extend though the block, but are merely recesses located in grooves 13 on the upper and/or lower surfaces of the block.

Thus, in view of the above, it is clear that the sprues 15 of Nakanishi cannot be equated with the “plurality of cavities” as recited in claim 11, because the sprues 15 of Nakanishi do not extend throughout the block, whereas according to claim 11 each cavity extends throughout the block and has an opening at the upper and lower peripheral surfaces of the block.

In other words, Nakanishi teaches that the block includes sprues that do not extend throughout the block to the upper and lower surfaces thereof, but fails to disclose or suggest that each cavity extends throughout the block and has an opening at the upper and lower peripheral surfaces of the block, as recited in claim 11.

Turning back to Nakanishi, the Applicants note that Nakanishi teaches that the block includes holes 19 that do not cross the grooves and teaches that only a single pair of sprues 15 are formed in the grooves 13 (see Figs. 1 and 6). Furthermore, Nakanishi teaches that a width of the sprues 15 extends only over a portion of the grooves 13, 63 (see Figs. 1, 4 and 6) and teaches that the width of the sprues 15 extends to form a recess between (but not extending beyond) the two grooves 13 in order to bridge the two grooves (see Figs. 5 and 7).

Thus, in view of the above, it is evident that Nakanishi teaches that the holes 19 do not cross the grooves, but fails to disclose or suggest that each cavity crosses the row of recessed portions and is arranged along a lengthwise direction of the row of recessed portions, as recited in claim 11.

Furthermore, in view of the above, it is apparent that Nakanishi teaches that only a single pair of sprues 15 are formed in the grooves 13, but fails to disclose or suggest that each cavity of the plurality of cavities is arranged along a lengthwise direction of the row of recessed portions, as recited in claim 11. In other words, claim 11 requires a plurality of cavities arranged along the row of recessed portions, whereas Nakanishi only requires a single pair of sprues, which cannot be arranged along a lengthwise direction of the grooves.

Moreover, in view of the above, it is clear that Nakanishi teaches that the sprues form a recess in a portion of the grooves and/or form a recess bridging two grooves, but fails to disclose or suggest that a width W1 of each cavity is greater than a width W2 of each recessed portion

and extends beyond the width W2 of each recessed portion so as to cover the width W2 of each recessed portion (the width W1 and the width W2 being measured in a direction perpendicular to the lengthwise direction of the row of recessed portions), as recited in claim 11.

For the reasons discussed above, the Applicants respectfully submit that the arrangement of the sprues 15, grooves 13 and 63 and the holes 19 of Nakanishi is completely different from the structure required by claim 11, because Nakanishi fails to disclose or suggest that (1) each cavity extends throughout the block and has an opening at the upper and lower peripheral surfaces of the block, (2) each cavity crosses the row of recessed portions and is arranged along a lengthwise direction of the row of recessed portions, and (3) a width W1 of each cavity is greater than a width W2 of each recessed portion and extends beyond the width W2 of each recessed portion so as to cover the width W2 of each recessed portion (the width W1 and the width W2 being measured in a direction perpendicular to the lengthwise direction of the row of recessed portions), as required by claim 11.

Therefore, because of the above-mentioned distinctions it is believed clear that independent claim 11 and claims 12, 14-20, 22, 24 and 25 that depend therefrom are not anticipated by Nakanishi.

Furthermore, there is no disclosure or suggestion in Nakanishi or elsewhere in the prior art of record which would have caused a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify Nakanishi to obtain the invention of independent claim 11. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 11 and claims 12, 14-20, 22, 24 and 25 that depend therefrom are clearly allowable over the prior art of record.

### III. Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance and an early notification thereof is earnestly requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone to resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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